

1645 A
S E R M O N

PREACHED AT THE
VISITATION held at **WAKEFIELD,**

By the Worshipful **EDMUND PYLE, LL.D.**

On **TUESDAY**, the 25th Day of **JULY, 1769.**

By **JAMES SCOTT, B.D.** R

Fellow of **TRINITY-COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE.**



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SERMON

PREACHED AT THE

VISITATION held at WAKEFIELD,

By the Worshipful Edmund Frye, LL.D.

On Tuesday, the 24th Day of June, 1769.



By J. A. COTT, B.D.

Prebendary of the Cathedral, Cambridge.



M A T T H. xxi. 21st V.

*Render therefore unto Caesar the Things
which are Caesar's.*



THESE Words are the wise and prudent Answer of our blessed Saviour to a most insidious Question, calculated by the Pharisees to entangle him in his Talk. Instigated with Envy at that universal Popularity, which he had so deservedly acquired; and burning with Hatred and Indignation against him, for the Sharpness, Freedom, and Frequency of his Reproofs (*Wo unto you Scribes and Pharisees, Hypocrites!*) they concerted a Plan, which in their simple Judgements was sure to draw him into a terrible

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Dilemma

Dilemma—either to ruin his Reputation with the People, or to expose him to the Loss of Power, and the Vengeance of insulted Majesty. To this End, they sent some of their own Disciples, with the Herodians, saying, Master, we know that thou art true, and teachest the Way of God in Truth, neither carest thou for any Man; for thou regardest not the Person of Men—we see here how cunningly they attack him, and wing the Arrow with Flattery, that it may fly more surely to the Mark—tell us now, what thinkest thou? Is it lawful to give Tribute unto Cæsar or not? This was not a question of mere Curiosity, but at that Time the Subject of much Debate and Contention. The Pharisees, a set of formal, precise, puritanical Persons, who pretended to an extraordinary Degree of Sanctity, and were for shaping every Thing exactly to fit their own Consciences, held that it was unlawful: Studious to ingratiate themselves with the People, and like many modern Patriots careless what Disorder, and Confusion their seditious Doctrines might occasion, they set themselves up for strenuous Assertors of the Liberty of the Subject; pretending to prove from the Law of Moses, and the fundamental Principles of their Constitution that the Romans could have no legal Right of Taxation over them. On the other Hand, the Herodians as warmly maintained that it was not only lawful, but just and reasonable, that the People should pay Tribute to those, from whom they derived the Advantages of Government, Protection from their Enemies, the free Exercise of their holy Religion, and the secure Enjoyment of their Rights and Properties. Of Principles so diametrically opposite were the two Sorts of Persons, whom the Pharisees sent to propose this ensnaring Question.

Question to our Saviour, is it lawful to give Tribute unto Cæsar, or not?---It seems, from the artful Manner in which they addressed him, that they were in hopes he would have answer'd in the Negative; and this would infallibly have completed their sanguinary Purposes, as it would have exposed him to the same Fate, which Judas of Galilee had met with a little before, and would have taken off the Odium of his Death from themselves. But suppose that Jesus, aware of their Malice, and the Danger of answering directly to so critical a Point, had waved the Question (as he did in the Case about the Division of the Inheritance, Man who made me a Judge, or a Divider over you?) yet neither Thus would he have escaped the Snare, that was laid for him: for then might not the Pharisees, with some Colour of Reason, have traduced, and vilified him to the People, either as one unable to answer to a plain and common Question, and consequently utterly unfit to explain the secret, and hidden Things of God; or as a Person, who thro' Fear of the Herodians had strangled the Truth, had betrayed the Cause of the People thro' Cowardice, and Timidity, and shewn himself more careful of his own Safety, than of the Liberty, Honour, and Interest of his Country? There was yet a third Way of treating this Question, and that was to answer simply in the Affirmative; a Way not less entangled with Danger and Difficulty, than the other two. For how certainly in this case would the Pharisees have accused him as a Traitor to his Country's Freedom; as a Violator of the Law of Moses; as a Court-Sycophant, and Tool to Herod; as a false and spurious Messiah, who did not answer the prophetic Description given of the legitimate Son of David, "that
" he

“ he should redeem Israel from Slavery and Vassalage, should
 “ break the Sceptre of the Exactor, and reign over them as King,
 “ from Sea even unto Sea?” Thus artfully, and wickedly was the
 Ambush laid; that which ever Way he should take he might
 fall into the Snare, and perish.—But how did our blessed
 Master’s prudent Behaviour disappoint their Malice, expose
 their Hypocrisy, and overwhelm them with Wonder and Con-
 fusion? He perceived their Wickedness, says the sacred Text,
 and cried, why tempt ye me, ye Hypocrites? Shew me the Tri-
 bute Money: and they brought unto him a Penny: and he saith,
 whose is this Image, and Supercription? And they say unto
 him Cæsar’s: then saith he unto them, render therefore unto
 Cæsar the Things which are Cæsar’s, and unto God the Things
 that are God’s: the Answer was not so much our blessed Sa-
 viour’s, as the Result of their own frank and open Confession:
 they acknowledged the Sovereignty of Cæsar, by suffering him
 to impose his Coin upon them: in the Image they own’d the
 Face of their Governour, and in the Inscription they read his
 Authority: it seemed to follow therefore necessarily from the
 Premises, that they ought to pay him every Mark of Duty and
 Subjection, which a Prince has a Right to exact from his Peo-
 ple: and when our Saviour tells them to render unto Cæsar
 the Things which are Cæsar’s, he only speaks the secret, and
 silent Conviction of their own Minds.

It is remarkable here that though the Question propos-
 ed was simply whether the Tribute of Money was to be
 paid to Cæsar or not, our blessed Lord does not confine his
 Answer to that one Particular, but commands us to render to
 him

him whatever is His. Now we find in sacred Scripture that there are various Tributes due to our lawful Sovereign: first, the Tribute of our Prayers; I command, says St. Paul, that Supplications, Prayers, and Intercessions be made for all Men, for Kings, and all that are in Authority: secondly, the Tribute of Praise, and Honour, thou shalt not speak Evil of the Ruler of thy People; and again, honour the King: thirdly, the Tribute of Obedience, and Subjection, submit yourselves to every Ordinance of Man for the Lord's sake: lastly, the Tribute of Money, as we may collect from our Saviour's Command here in my Text, as well as from his own Example; having wrought a Miracle to pay Tribute for himself and Peter. These are the Marks of Duty and Allegiance, which we are bound by all Laws, human and divine, to render to our lawful Governour. It seems, by our blessed Lord's having joined Subjection to the civil Magistrate, with Obedience to God, as if there was a natural Relation and Connection between these two Duties. And indeed if we look back into the Histories of other Nations, but more particularly into that of our own, we shall find that the Persons, who have been most active in sowing Sedition, and alienating the Minds of the People from their rightful Sovereign, have been Men of the loosest, and most detestable Principles in religious Matters. Need I instance the unhappy Troubles in the Reign of CHARLES THE FIRST; which tho' they might have arisen primarily from ill-advised and untimely Exertions of the Prerogative, would never have been carried to such shameful Lengths, if it had not been for the Instigation of wicked Men, who having shaken off all religious Restraint, became impatient of every civil Tye, and Coercion? Would

Would to God the Complexion of the present Times did not bear so strong a Resemblance to those, which I have been just pointing at! But who are they, that have been the chief Promoters of our late Disturbances and Riots? Who are they that, under the Name and Banner of Liberty, blow the Trumpet of Sedition, and sound an Alarm thro' the whole Kindgom? Are they not Men of the most turbulent and levelling Principles; Enemies alike to our happy Constitution in Church and State; who living without Christ, and without God in the World, would live too without Laws, and without Government; who think it the Perfection of Freedom to do every thing, that seems good in their own Eyes, and the very Emphasis of Slavery to be subject to any Rules, tho' common to every Member of the Society, and made by the Legislative Power erected in it; who fright the People with villainous Apprehensions, the Spectres of their own discontented and factious Minds, and with unparallel'd Audacity insult the Throne with Fictions and Falsehoods? These are the Men, who set themselves up for strenuous Assertors of the Liberty of the Subject; ungodly Men who despise Dominion, and speak evil of Dignities; who under a Pretence of redressing Grievances endeavour to confound all Order and Distinction, and to introduce Anarchy, Tumult, and every evil Work.

In the best of Times, and best of Governments there have never been wanting Men of this factious, and turbulent Spirit: for in every Society, where there are Honours, and Emoluments set apart to reward those, who employ their Time and Abilities in the Service of the Public, Men of envious and
selfish

Selfish Minds will never fail to think these Rewards prostituted to the basest Purposes, if they are not bestowed on themselves. *Hinc illæ Lachrymæ !* Hence all that Discontent, and Dissatisfaction, those Murmurings and Complaints, those pretended Grievances, and Oppressions, which we hear of—they are the rank Creation of Pride—the Voice of discontented Ambition, caught up, and echo'd to and fro by Men of desperate Minds and desperate Fortunes ; who are glad of all Opportunities of embroiling the Peace of Society, and throwing every Thing into Confusion. I appeal to the Candour and Conscience of every reasonable Person, whether this be not the true Source of all those Grievances and Apprehensions, which are invented by the Spawn of Faction to inflame the Minds of the People, and render the Possession of Power uneasy to those, who are at present entrusted with it. It is much to be lamented that the Changes in Administration have of late Years been so frequent : a Circumstance that conduces to strengthen Opposition, and to keep Faction in Life and Spirits. Solomon tells us that for the Transgression of a Land many are the Rulers thereof : And perhaps it is intended by Providence as a Judgement upon us, and a Punishment due to our Sins, that there are at this time so many *would be Rulers*, so many Men of Ministerial Pretensions in the Kingdom. To look round one would be inclined to think it the easiest Thing in the World to manage the great Machine of Government : for if a Man has Abilities enough to write his Name, he thinks himself qualified to be a Minister : and should such a one thro' the casual concurrence of Political Atoms, or the strange and unaccountable Freaks of Fortune have been once unhappily situated

ated at the Helm, adieu for ever afterwards to all Peace and Content in a private Station ! His Occupation's gone,—and he loses all Relish for those domestic Virtues, which may formerly perhaps have raised him much Credit and Esteem—he can never pull down his towering Thoughts, and make them stoop to the humble Duties of a private Citizen—he wanders up and down, a restless and perturbed Spirit, fomenting Discord, forming Cabals, and stooping to the meanest Artifices to propagate his Factious, and Seditious Principles : his Situation seems to be well pointed out by the Evangelist, in his Description of the unclean Spirit : he returneth to his House whence he went out, and when he cometh he findeth it swept and garnished : then goeth he, and taketh to him seven other Spirits more wicked than himself ; and the last State of that Man is worse than the first. Such is too commonly the Condition of those, who have been degraded from the Management of public Affairs : and the Mischiefs accruing to Society from their fordid Conduct, and seditious Combinations, are many, and grievous : they tend to destroy that Union of the Subjects, upon which the internal Health, and the firm and robust Habit of the State chiefly depend : they embolden Men, who are Enemies to our excellent Constitution, to publish their dangerous, and destructive Doctrines ; to infuse into the Minds of the People, ever fond of Novelty, and prone to change, a Dislike to the present System of Government ; to possess them with I know not what Notions of Rights, and Powers, inherent in themselves ; to wean them from a due Obedience and Subjection to their civil Parent ; and to delude them with Dreams, and Visions of Democracy.

It

It would be utter Loss of Time to argue with Persons of this factious and turbulent Disposition upon Principles of Reason and Conscience. When their own Humour and Interest are concerned, you will in vain tell them that it is unjust and impious, contrary to the Law of Nature, as well as to the express Command of God, to attempt to disorder the Wheels of Government, and to alienate the Minds of the People from their Sovereign—that there is but one single Circumstance, which can justify the least Resistance to the Supreme Power, and that is when the Supreme Power is manifestly employ'd to enslave the Subject, and marches boldly on to the Ruin of the State :—a Circumstance, which I am confident the most abandon'd of the present Faction do not in their own Conscience *believe* to be the Case, whatever they may *pretend*. No ! it is certain that a milder and gentler Prince never sat upon the Throne, than our most gracious Sovereign, nor ever one, who had more at Heart the Prosperity and Happiness of his Subjects. What arbitrary Exertions of the Prerogative, what Encroachments upon the Rights of the People, have we to complain of ? His Reign was founded in Truth and Equity—it commenced with making the Courts of Law free and independent, that Justice might be fairly and impartially administer'd : and if, thro' the long and established Custom of Office, any ministerial Measure has been taken, inconsistent with our just Rights and Privileges, we have seen it judicially condemned, and there is not the least Probability, I had almost said Possibility of its coming again into Practice. What then would these Sons of Sedition have more ? Let them stand forth boldly, and make their respective Demands without Equivocation ; and we shall

shall find that one Part of them are only dissatisfied because they are not entrusted with the Management of Affairs ; and the other (impatient of all Regal Government, a Set of furious, and flaming Republicans) would tie up the Hands of Majesty ; and reduce it to such a State of Weakness, as would disable it from resisting their Violence and Oppression !

Such, my Reverend Brethren, is the unhappy Situation of this distracted Kingdom ! And let it not, I entreat you, be reckon'd Arrogance and Presumption in me, but rather be it imputed to a tender Concern for the Welfare of my Country, if I take this Opportunity of recommending it earnestly to you, to enforce upon the Minds of the People, committed severally to your Cares, a due Subjection and Obedience to Government. I would not here be thought to insinuate that we are any of us remiss in inculcating this necessary Duty ; a Duty essential to the very Being of Society, and the Interest of that holy Religion, which we are ordained to dispense : but it seems to be more particularly incumbent upon us to be instant and importunate in recommending it at this Juncture, when a general Want of Subordination runs thro' the whole Kingdom—when one Degree treads close upon the Heels of another, and is impatient of the least Precedence and Superiority—when those great Cements of Society, the Fear of God, Reverence to the King, Obedience to the Laws, and Love for the Community, appear to be the standing Jest of Libertines and Fools—when Treason and Sedition no longer lie sculking in dark and secret Places, but crawl about the Streets, and bask themselves under the Mid-day Sun. At such a Crisis as this
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it is our indispensible Duty, as good Citizens, and Ministers of the Gospel of Peace, to exert our utmost Abilities in laying before the People the Necessity of a due Subordination, and Subjection to Government; in recommending to them the Ornament of a meek and quiet Spirit; in being watchful to prevent the Enemy from sowing Tares among the Wheat, and careful in rooting up those seditious Principles, which may be already disseminated by evil and designing Men. I do not mean that we should ever prostitute the Pulpit to political Harangues, or the Interests of a Party: God forbid! for what Fellowship hath Righteousness with Unrighteousness, and what Communion hath Light with Darkness, and what Concord hath Christ with Belial? But we *may*, we *must* so far interfere with Matters of State, as to imitate the Example of our beloved Master, and his blessed Apostles, in recommending it to every Soul to be subject to the higher Powers. This was the Doctrine, which they inculcated under the bloody Reigns of those Monsters of Iniquity, a TIBERIUS, a CLAUDIUS, and a NERO: how much more are we bound to enforce it, under the mild and auspicious Government of our present Sovereign? I am aware indeed that by so doing we may draw down upon ourselves the Odium, and Obloquy of these pretended Patriots, who delude and intoxicate the People with the maddening Name of Liberty. It is the peculiar Misfortune of those, who are honest enough to speak in favour of the present State, to be accused as venal, time-serving Wretches, who would climb to Preferment, like Parrots by their Beak: while they, who thro' Pique, or Passion, or Views of Interest, reprove and revile their Governours, are looked upon as Men of singular Freedom of Mind,

Mind, and choice Friends to the Cause of Liberty, and the People. But what then? Let us remember that our blessed Saviour was not afraid of offending the Pharisees, or losing his Popularity, when he enjoin'd them to render unto Cæsar the Things which are Cæsar's: besides we know that it is our Duty to please and obey God, rather than Man; and let me add that in the Case now before us, it is not our Duty only, but our Interest too both here, and hereafter: for should the present mutinous, and seditious Humours prevail, our excellent Constitution may be utterly ruin'd:—When Popular Discontents, and Factions are suffer'd to rise to any considerable Height, no one can pretend to set Bounds to their Rage, or say hitherto shall ye come, and no further! They may shake the very Foundations of Church and State, and bury the fair Fabrick in Ruins: from the disorder'd Chaos a wretched Tyranny is sure to arise: for it is worth the Consideration of those, who are new-fangled, and fond of modelling Governments, that every Government in its Infancy, like unripe Fruit, must necessarily be harsh and sour: it can only be protected by standing Armies, and Obedience to it must be extorted by Force and Violence; 'till in Process of Time that which was rugged at first becomes gentle and easy. However deep and firm the Foundation of Liberty may be laid, the Fruition of it is for after Ages; like the planting of Trees, whose Shade and Fruit are only to be enjoy'd by Posterity. With what Abhorrence then should we behold these Disturbers of the public Tranquillity, who with nefarious Hand would lay the Ax to the Root of our excellent Constitution; a Constitution, which has stood the Attack of so many Ages, and however hack'd and hew'd by Sedition on one Hand,

Hand, and Prerogative on the other, has derived Strength and Vigour from every Wound : a Constitution which we now behold fair and flourishing, as a Cedar of Libanus ; under whose Shade we may sit at Ease, and enjoy the Fruit of our Labours. O my Brethren let us pray for the Peace of Jerufalem ! May they alone prosper, that love it ! May Peace be within their Walls, and Plenteoufnefs within their Palaces ! For our Brethren, and Companions fake let us wish them Prosperity ; yea because of THE HOUSE OF THE LORD OUR GOD, let us seek to do them good ! Amen.



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